

patients is unknown. Most fetuses with Edwards syndrome die during the embryonic and foetal life. However, a small number of children with trisomy 18 survive beyond their first year of life. Knowledge about the clinical picture and on the prognosis of Edwards syndrome patients is of great importance with respect to neonatal care and the decisions about invasive treatments. The possibility of long-term survival should be considered when counselling parents regarding trisomy 18.

Conclusion: Whilst Meckel's diverticulum is a widely reported finding in patients with Edwards syndrome and is a known cause of intussusception, the incidence of intussusception in such patients is unknown. This is likely the result of several factors. Firstly, the majority of infants with Edwards syndrome die during the intra-uterine period. Secondly, those that do survive birth are often assigned for palliative care with no invasive management and thus succumb to the more serious clinical manifestations of the syndrome, such as cardiac malformations and respiratory difficulties, early in infancy. Of the less than 10% of cases that survive to 1 year, many do so with the help of invasive surgery. Baty et al (1994) reported that at age 1 year, there was an average of approximately 2 operations per living child (4). Knowledge about the clinical picture and on the prognosis of Edwards syndrome patients is of great importance with respect to neonatal care and the decisions about invasive treatments. The speed to have a confirmed diagnosis is important for making decisions about medical procedures. Often, interventions are performed under emergency conditions, without many opportunities for discussion, and they involve difficult medical and ethical issues (2).

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Medical students' plans for foundation training: Malta or UK?

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Introduction: Monitoring the migration of doctors is important to ensure the local health care system remains fully staffed. The aim of this study was to determine the number of medical students who currently intend to complete Foundation training in the Maltese Islands.

Methods: A questionnaire was distributed to all students present during lectures on several occasions between October and November 2014.

Results: The response rate was 50.2%, of whom 56.4% (Year 1), 64.5% (Year 2), 61% (Year 3), 53.6% (Year 4) and 93.1% (Year 5) students aim to commence Foundation training locally. Almost 88% of students provided motives, ranked from most to least frequent: local student, excellent local FY Programme, experience abroad, finances, familiar with Maltese system, International student, opportunities available, and language barrier. There are 185 students in Year 1 (9.7% non-EU; 27% are EU (non-Maltese)), 183 in Year 2 (6.6% non-EU; 31.1% EU), 165 in Year 3 (15.2% non-EU; 21.2% EU), 102 in Year 4 (10.8% non-EU; 11.8% EU), and 112 in Year 5 (10.7% non-EU; 0.9% EU).

Conclusion: As students progress through training, the proportion planning to stay in Malta to complete their Foundation training increases. The high ranking of the Malta Foundation School is a strong motive. Although these results appear to augur well for the near future, the large proportion of non-local students currently in Years 1-3 may shift the balance in 2017-2019.

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Clinical students' perception of their educational experiences (2014-2015)

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Introduction: The aim of this study is to examine students' perception of their undergraduate educational experience at the University of Malta Medical School.

Methods: A questionnaire was distributed to 379 Year 3 to Year 5 medical students who were present during lecture hours between October and November 2014.

Results: There were 196 respondents in total (51.7% response rate). Just over 30% and almost 50% of Year 4 and 5 students respectively felt they were being prepared to become good doctors, down from 68% in Year 3. Almost 90% of students in Years 4 and 5 reported that important clinical skills are not covered in the curriculum, up from 63% in Year 3. Only just over 50% of Year 4 and 5 students reported that the hospital was serving its purpose as a teaching hospital, down from 72% in Year 3. Nearly 75% of clinical students reported that the number of students in their cohort affects the quality of their education.

Conclusion: Students become more aware of the skills and knowledge required of a good doctor when they start their clinical years. Despite the extensive clinical exposure, the majority of Year 4 and 5 students still feel unprepared for the world of work. Efforts to make the clinical learning environment more student-friendly and increase the time allocated for clinical skills teaching is essential to compensate for the increasing number of medical students.

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Rib angulation

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Introduction: Optimal design in pressure vessels has resulted in filament-wound pressure vessels constructed of filaments bound within a matrix, resulting in high-strength, lightweight pressure vessels. Since the properties of reinforcing fibers in pressure vessels are highly direction-specific, the reinforcing fibers are optimally loaded along their length. This implies that ribs should also be oriented in the load direction. Rib angulation was investigated to assess whether human ribs behave as efficient struts.

Methods: The angulation of vector forces in the chest wall was measured using of Finite Element Analysis (FEA) computer simulations of a model of the chest wall based on the mean measurements of eight Caucasian male thoracic computerised tomography (CT) scans. A literature search was performed on adult rib angulation. Changes in rib angulation with development were investigated using CT data at different ages.

Results: The FEA ellipsoid model and Gayzik series were statistically significantly correlated ($r=0.753$, $p=0.01$). There was no correlation between the ellipsoid model and Dansereau series (Pearson $r=0.378$ $p=0.281$, t -test $p=0.163$), nor between the two reference series, the Gayzik and Dansereau series (Pearson $r=0.112$, $p=0.758$, t -test $p=0.353$). However the ellipsoid model was within one standard deviation range of the large Dansereau series. Rib angulation increases with age, two-way ANOVA $p<0.001$, and rib level, $p<0.001$.